

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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## NOTIFICATION.

The quarter of a sheet at the end of this Register will be found to contain the Title Page, Table of Contents and Index to the last volume.

TO

## THE EARL OF LIVERPOOL,

*On the recent affair at Dover, where the jail was broken open and prisoners rescued in the presence of soldiers—On his Lordship's speech relative to distresses in America—On the new Loan and the prospect before us.*

London, 1 June, 1820.

MY LORD,

When you began to climb the ladder of wealth and power, I began to write to the people of this country. I have addressed more essays to you by name than to any other person. I have followed you pretty closely throughout your career. *Thirty-six Volumes* of this work contain the true history of the affairs, in which you have been engaged; and about *four more*,

(during four quarters of a year) will follow you, I think, to the end of your tether. I have addressed to you, in the course of these thirty-six volumes, more than a hundred letters; and, I dare say you have, a thousand times, wished me and my Letters at the Devil. In sickness and in health, in prosperity and adversity, in prison and at large, by land and by water, at home and abroad, I have stuck to you. Whatever sins I am to answer for, that of having neglected my duty towards you will never be numbered amongst them; and, having discharged it faithfully for so many years, I mean to continue to do it to the end; which, as I said before, I shall, I am convinced, have to record before the close of the *fortieth* volume of this work, which will be closed in June, 1821; and, by that time, we shall see a *radical* change of system; or, it will have become too perilous for any one to venture to *print* any thing hostile to the system; for, the system, if it exist at all be.

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yond that time, will become too desperate and ferocious to be met by any individual, who employs his pen in any other way than that of chanting its praises! After that time, or thereabouts, we must wait for the end in silence.

The first topic, upon which I have to address your Lordship, at this time, is, the late *Jail-Adventure at Dover*, which has some circumstances belonging to it of a nature deeply interesting to the country. I shall not speak of the matter from any knowledge that I possess through any channel except that of the corrupt (or respectable) London Press; though I do possess other knowledge of a very singular and interesting description. I shall take the thing as I find it in the corrupt and humbugging news-papers, and then put a few questions to your Lordship on the subject. The following is the account contained in all these papers:—

“DOVER, MAY 26.—On Wednesday, the Lively Excise cutter captured a smuggling galley. The crew, eleven persons, were landed here, and were committed to Dover gaol until ten of them could be removed to some receiving ship. This

“morning was fixed for the removal, but it being thought a rescue would be attempted, a body of constables, the seamen of the preventive service, and military, were drawn up in and outside of the gaol. The time of removal was 12 o'clock, and a large body had collected, which continued increasing every minute, with every disposition to riot and rescue. The Mayor, and a brother magistrate, gave strict injunctions to the constables to keep the peace, and to the seamen and military not to charge unless absolutely driven to do so in self-defence. The smugglers were on the point of being brought out, when a general shout was set up by the crowd of “*Liberty for ever!*” and a number of stones, brick-bats, &c. were thrown. The aspect of affairs at this time became so serious that the Mayor directed the removal of the prisoners to be suspended; and it was fortunate he did, for there is little doubt that bloodshed and even murder, would have ensued. An officer was wounded severely, and the magistrate received a contusion. The mob then proceeded to farther vio-



"lence, and notwithstanding  
 "the Riot Act was twice read  
 "from the gaol window by the  
 "Mayor, commenced an attack  
 "on the gaol, unroofed the top,  
 "threw part of the side wall  
 "down, released the whole of  
 "the smugglers, with several  
 "others confined in the gaol,  
 "and succeeded in getting them  
 "clear off, their imposing num-  
 "bers intimidating the officers  
 "from acting. One of the most  
 "active was taken, and placed  
 "in a chaise to be conveyed to  
 "Canterbury, but a mob stop-  
 "ped the chaise, and released  
 "the rioter. Since the release  
 "of the smugglers the town re-  
 "mains tranquil."

Now, my lord, you are the Lord  
 Warden of the Cinque Ports at  
 a salary of some thousands a year,  
 and I ask you whether this be true,  
 or false, in point of fact? The  
 facts alone are interesting, even  
 at the first glance; but, what are  
 they, when they come to be look-  
 ed closely into? Dover is a  
 garrison town; it has a strong  
 body of Soldiers in it and close  
 to it; and yet, was the jail  
 broken open and the prisoners  
 rescued at noon-day? Are these  
 facts true, my lord?

First, it may be useful to ob-  
 serve, that the "scamen of the

preventive service" are, in this  
 respect, Soldiers. Then there  
 was it seems, a body of Soldiers  
 besides. These troops were  
 drawn up round the jail; and  
 yet the jail was broken into,  
 and the prisoners released!

It seems that the magistrates,  
 gave strict injunctions to the  
 military, and even to the con-  
 stables, not to charge, "unless  
 absolutely driven to do so in  
 self-defence." How different  
 this from the orders given by  
 the magistrates of Manchester!  
 They did not order the soldiers  
 to wait till they should be at-  
 tacked. They ordered them to  
 act, to make an attack, before  
 any thing had been done by the  
 people either against the sol-  
 diers or against any body else.

However, there are few persons,  
 I believe, who will blame the  
 Magistrates of Dover. But, the military, or, at least,  
 one of them, was attacked, it  
 seems, and the magistrates too.

"An OFFICER was wounded  
 "severely, and the MAGIS-  
 "TRATE received a contusion!"  
 And yet the troops did not  
 charge nor fire. And, though  
 the riot act was read (which  
 it was not at Manchester), the  
 people proceeded to pull down,  
 to make a practical breach in,

the side of the jail, and released their friends, while, of course, the SOLDIERS, the seamen of the *preventive service*, the *magistrates* and the *constables* stood looking on; aye, while the SOLDIERS, with muskets in their hands, and with bayonets at the top of the muskets, hearing the Dover Boys shouting out "*Liberty for ever*," and seeing them making a breach in the wall of the jailand leading forth their friends in triumph!!!

What! did the OFFICER hold his tongue when he got the *severe wound*? Did the *magistrate* put up quietly with his *contusion*? But, the OFFICER, my lord! Did the OFFICER do nothing and say nothing, when he was wounded, and severely wounded too? Did he not tell his men to *charge* or to *fire*? Can this be so? What a wonderfully patient OFFICER and what an incomparably patient *magistrate*! But, above all things, what a patient and considerate and self-denying officer! And yet, if this account be true, these gentlemen, wonderful as it may seem, must have *refrained from ordering the soldiers to fire or charge*; for, otherwise, the soldiers would of

course, have fired or charged; or, the soldiers and preventive seamen would have REFUSED to fire or charge, which was *not the case*, of course; for, if *such a thing* had happened; if so very important a thing had happened; a thing of such immense importance, the *respectable press* would surely have noticed it; and, indeed, the thing would have been mentioned in *parliament*, and especially in the "*faithful Commons*," before now; or, at least, one would naturally suppose so. Oh, no! the SOLDIERS did not, I take it for granted, REFUSE TO FIRE; for, if they had, the nation would, to a certainty, have heard of it long before now! So that we must ascribe the absence of bloodshed to the extreme forbearances and gentleness of the officer and the magistrate, for which it would be hard indeed to blame them.

However, if the whole story be not a *romance*, it is, it must be confessed, a very wonderful story; and it is not less wonderful, that so very little should have been said about it by the respectable part of the press and by the talkers about such mat-



lers! If only half a dozen poor fellows are seen together out in a road or a field in the North, what a hue and cry is set up about *training and drilling and plotting and conspiring*. If twenty of them meet in the open day with sticks in their hands, the COURIER calls it a *rebellion*, and the "ladies of HUDDERSFIELD" treat the *Soldiers* to a "grand dinner." Nay, the same atrocious tool of corruption, tells us, that, in Scotland, men are actually imprisoned for *Radicalism*, and even on *suspicion of Radicalism*! While, the men of Kent make a practical breach in a jail-wall, at noon-day, and let out their friends, and send them away without molestation, while SOLDIERS, constables and magistrates stand looking on, without making any other attempt at resistance than merely *reading the riot act*! And, this occurrence is taken no more notice of than is taken of the death of some insignificant fellow, whose relations pay the respectable press to record the fact of the breath having left his body.

How are we to account for this, my lord? The magistrates did, it seems, cause one of the

breach-makers, one of the besiegers, to be seized, to be put into a post-chaise, to be chained to two constables, and ordered the post-chaise to drive off for Canterbury Jail. But, the besiegers stopped the chaise, and *released the prisoner*! Now, my good Lord Warden, how could all this be, in a place full of SOLDIERS? This was a very deliberate act. The besiegers did, some say, hasten to the *turnpike-gate, half a mile out of the town*; that they there stopped the post-chaise; knocked off the chains from their friend; and, having put the two constables back into the post-chaise, *sent it back to the magistrates*! "Since which," says the account, "the town remains tranquil." And, the corrupt press cries, with one accord: MUM! MUM! HUSH, HUSH, HUSH!

I shall not describe to you, my lord, my feelings on this occasion. The whole story will come out by-and-by; but, having flattered here round about the flame for a while, I shall now, before I single myself, fly off to your late speech on the Marquis of LANSDOWNE's motion on *commercial relief*, during which speech it pleased you to speak of the *Distresses in America*,

upon which subject I can and will never hear you descant without making some observation.

The deep distress of *this* country you acknowledged; but you said, that it *did not arise from the Debt and Taxes*. Oh, no! We, who say it does arise from those causes *must be wrong*; or, the Debt and Taxes *must be bad things*; and this must, for reasons too obvious to mention, not be allowed by any means. But, as it required, in answer to all our arguments, something more than mere assertion, your Lordship resorted to an argument of experience in this way. The United States of America has a very small Debt and very trifling taxes; yet the distress is greater there than in any other part of the world; *therefore*, our distress cannot arise from our Debt and Taxes.

Now, if the premises were true, the conclusion might be false, because the United States might have evils that we know nothing of; and their distress might arise from these evils. But, I need not play with this false logic, when I have to say, that *your premises are false*; and this I have a right to say, because you can have none but

hearsay-information on the subject, and I speak from my own personal knowledge relative to the facts.

It is very true, that those merchants in America, who trade with England, and especially those who import *English goods* are in distress, or have been *ruined*, as far as the loss of that trade goes; but, what is that to the country at large? Where are the *evidences* of that distress of which you talk? Do the *farmers* of America go roaring to the Legislature for *relief*? Do *they* tell the Congress that they are ruined, and that they must abandon their farms? Do *they* complain of increased poor-rates, of a want of employment for the poor, and of their intolerable burdens? Do *they* ask for Corn-Bills and Wool-Bills and all sorts of mad nonsense? Do you hear of any people *starving* in America? Are there bands of poor creatures there sent about begging with a waggon-load of nails, as the poor famished things at Birmingham are? Do you hear of men being *harnessed like horses*, and set to draw gravel, in carts, to repair the high-ways? Do you see any subscriptions for giving lodging to the *houseless poor*? No: it is a plentiful country and the people are happy; and I thank God that it is so; for, as long



as that remains despotism will in vain strive to strangle freedom.

But, if what you say about the distresses of America were true, what *praise do you pronounce on her government!* That government talks about no dungeon-bill, no gagging bill, no banishment bill, no bills relating to what are called blasphemy, sedition and treason. No degree of *distress* can, then, it seems, make the people *dislike that government*, nor make that government afraid of the people. That, then, is a thing you ought to take into view. Why did you not *mention that too?* That was a thing worth mentioning. Why, then, did you omit it?

It is of vast importance to make this people believe, that the *Americans* are in *distress*; because, if that can be done, then the causes of the distress here can be the better disguised. But, even if this were to succeed, it would only answer a temporary purpose. It would not *stay the plague* for a day. The poison is at work here in a way that nothing but a *radical cure* will put a stop to; and the longer the cure is delayed, the more sure it is, that only a radical one will do.

Your lordship drew so strong

a picture of *American distress*, that you thought it necessary to say, that *your feeling towards America was very friendly*. Oh, lord, yes! The Americans know *all about that!* They do not, indeed, forget CAPTAIN HENRY, whose *friendly* visit to them was while *your lordship* was Secretary for Foreign Affairs! But, they neither want nor care about your friendship. They are in a state *not to fear your enmity*; and they care, in short, nothing at all either about your friendship or your hatred. The last war *settled the point* between the two countries. Every man who really loves America, rejoices at the *distresses* there, which you would have us think so much of. They are confined to *English Houses* and those who import from England; and those have been ruined, in great part, by *the operations here*. Do you not see, that, *by raising the value of money here, you augment the debts due from those men to men here?* To be sure you do; and this has been the great cause of their failure. They cannot *pay their debts here*. So much the better for America; and so much the better for us, against whom the *six acts* were levelled. It is

the *English trade* in America that is in *distress*; and nothing else. The traders with England, who live at New York, are affected by the Bank Works, just as much as the traders of Liverpool are. And so they ought. But, what is *their distress* to the *people of America*? Our own handful of speculators and jobbers and traders are ruined; and then we cry out, that *all America* is ruined! It is surprizing how little you all seem to know of that country. There are, in *Cobbett's Parliamentary Register*, No. 6; or, rather, there will be, *two notes* on LORD MILTON's speech on the *Wool-Bill*, which, if his lordship would but get them by heart, would be of everlasting service to him. And, if *your lordship* were to read them they would be of use to you too.

I now come to the last of my proposed topics: *your intended new loan* and our *brilliant prospects*. Last year you said, that *no more loans would be wanted in time of peace*. I laughed, as soon as I saw the news-papers containing this, and I sent my laughing home. It is quite useless to waste one's time in any remarks upon the thumping loan now about to be

made. It is only another *patch*; and, in the end, it will only add to the "*mighty crash*." However, it is very true, that men are not such fools as they were. They now, for the far greater part, see, and say, that "*the thing cannot go on*." This, which was long an observation confined to my Register, is now in every one's mouth. The *loyal fellows*, who, only a few years ago, would not have scrupled to murder me, if they could have done it without risk, merely because I *talked* in this way, now talk in this very way themselves. Whole crowds now meet, even about the 'Change, and declare, that the thing cannot go on. Those who used to believe in the solidity of the funding system as firmly as I believe in its hollowness, now shake their wise pates at the mention of it. They are gaping to see what Parliament will do; and they may, before they see any thing done, gape their breath all out. However, there are yet to be found some, who cannot see clearly. Puppies of more than nine days. One of these has discovered, as he thinks, that I was wrong, in my letter to Mr. Tierney. I shall (below) insert this letter of S. H. and my an-



swer. They may be useful to your lordship.

I cannot conclude without first noticing the debate of *Tuesday last*, in the House of Commons, on the subject of the agricultural distresses. How surprized your worthy colleague seems to have been, when he found himself in a minority! From the result of this debate, one would almost suppose that the land-owners were beginning to see that their estates must finally march off, if they do not arrest them in time. I look upon this division as being the first little *trial of strength* between the land and the funds. Mr. Home Sumner is reported to have said that *he would not by any means wish for the smallest deduction to be made from the interest of the debt*. And if that be the case, I cannot see, for my part, what was the object of his motion. As a measure to prevent the fundholders from grabbing the last

acre of land, I can see clearly enough, that it is necessary to make them pay a high price for their corn. But, I can see equally clear, that if their interest continue to be paid in full, they will, at any rate, in a very short time, have the whole of the land. Mr. Sumner thought proper to speak in very harsh terms of the petitioners for Parliamentary Reform. Whereupon I beg leave to tell Mr. Sumner, that the petitioners for Parliamentary Reform will not, in the approaching struggle between the land and the funds, *side with the enemies of reform*. I, for my part, want to see a radical reform of the House of Commons; universal suffrage and annual parliaments; and I never will be on the side of those who are against such reform. I know it to be agreeable to the constitution; I know it to be for the good of the country and of the king; and I shall always be on the side of those who will be in favour of such reform, whether

they be fund-holders or land-holders; whether they "*came in with the conqueror*," or whether they have been hatched in the hot-bed of bank-paper, as maggots are hatched in the rump of a sheep. So that Mr. SUMNER may do as well, perhaps, to reflect a little before he wantonly flings dirt at us another time. I myself have been a great deal too much of a stickler for the nobility and gentry. Since the treatment we have now of late received at their hands, my mind is a good deal altered; and since they will despise us of the "*Lower Orders*," I am for turning round to our brethren of the Funds, who have all come up within these thirty years. Yes, yes, I am for going to these our brethren, who were, for the far greater part, waiters at taverns, shop-boys, porters, and the like. They are too green yet to pretend that they came in at the Conquest; and, especially if they should stand

in need of our friendship to secure to them the payment of the debts due to them, they will be disposed to treat us with a little civility, which is more than we get, or than we have got, at any rate, of late, from the hands of the others, of whom, it seems, upon this occasion, Mr. SUMNER was the organ, and who speaks of us and our petitions in most opprobrious terms, tho' he complains of Mr. BARING's *incivility* to the agriculturists, who, it seems, *can get petitions written for them* as well as other folks.

Both sides, during the debate, had a slap at us! This will go on for a little while, perhaps. But one side or the other will become more kind to us, I hope, before it be long; and for that side I shall be, let it be which it may.

I am, my Lord,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

WM. COBBETT.



## LETTER TO MR. COBBETT,

*From S. H. informing him that  
Gold is really coming into  
the Bank.*

London, May 27th, 1820.

SIR,

1. I have for many years been a reader of your writings, and a convert to your opinions on the Bullion question; and, in many conversations which have taken place, from time to time, between myself and a friend of mine, who holds a contrary opinion, I have always come off victoriously, by means of the arguments in your publications; so that I thought I had entirely put him to silence. But very lately he has returned to the attack with new courage, and he has brought forward a statement, which I confess I am not prepared totally to gainsay.

2. He not only asserts that Gold Bullion is coming fast into this country, but also (and

in direct contradiction to your positive assertion) that it is coming into the hands of the Bank, without the Bank increasing the quantity of its paper.

3. Upon my asking him to explain, he replied that the merchants, who discount bills at the Bank, purchase goods which they sell on the Continent, and receive Bullion for a part of the price of these goods;—that, in consequence of the high rate of exchange in favour of this country, the quantity of Bullion thus sent over, in payment of these goods, is very considerable—and that these merchants pay this Bullion to the Bank to take up their bills; or, what amounts to the same thing, that they are sending it to the Mint, to be coined into sovereigns, with which they take up these bills.

4. On looking back to your letter to Mr. TIERNEY of the 1st

July 1818, the only observation which I can find, bearing on this point, is the answer which you gave to the Member of Parliament who asked, "Why goods might not be sent abroad, and sold for Gold, and the Gold brought to the Bank?" To which you reply, "*that the owners of the goods would keep the Gold for their own use.*"

5. Now, it appears that, if these owners of Gold are indebted to the Bank, one of the first uses they must make of it will be to pay their debts with it; and therefore my antagonist says, that your answer to the M. P. is not a satisfactory one, and that you have taken weak ground, when you assert that gold *cannot come* into the possession of the Bank without its increasing its quantity of notes;—and it would seem that, if what is stated by my antagonist is really going on, Sir, your

answer to the M. P. does not afford sufficient explanation.

6. My friend stated another circumstance which may tend to illustrate this point. He said that, even although the owners of this Gold *were not debtors* to the Bank; and did not pay this Bullion to the Bank in liquidation of debt; yet as they must do *something* with it when they got it, and would not keep it as a dead stock on hand, they would probably send it to the Mint to be coined, in order to employ it in their trade: and that thus, by bringing it into general circulation as coin, the Bank are able to withdraw from circulation an equal quantity of their notes, without diminishing the amount of the sum wanted for general use.

7. I cannot help acknowledging that my friend's statement, if it is founded in fact, *has staggered me considerably*; and it



seems to be proved, both by the state of the Exchanges and the price of Bullion, that very considerable quantities of Gold have already been brought in, and will continue to be so, as long as the Exchanges with the nations of the Continent keep up to their present rates.

8. I do not know if you will think the circumstances I have stated worthy of any printed answer or notice; but, at any rate, an acknowledgment of the receipt of this communication, by a single line at the end of your Register, will greatly oblige your

Old Correspondent

and Reader,

S. H.

#### MR. COBBETT'S ANSWER.

London, 1st June, 1820.

SIR,

You tell me that your friend's statement has staggered you

considerably; and if this be really the case, I am sorry to tell you that I possess no cure for the staggers, though many people have said that I deal too much in horse-physics. As to the fact of the Bank being now *getting a great parcel of gold into its hands*; all that I can say is, that when that fact shall be proved to me upon the oaths of two credible witnesses who are not Bank Directors, and who have in no wise an interest in the concern, then I will believe the fact, and not before. Mine is reasoning; and I am not to be answered by a man's telling me that *he knows the contrary to be true*. Whenever I meet with a logician that proceeds in that way, my hand seems to wander forth involuntarily in search of a broom-stick. A Scotsman, talking to me, once, in Hampshire, about the seasons, insisted that Scotland was a warmer climate than Hampshire. When I began to reason with him, he asked me if I had

*ever been* in Scotland. I said I had not. Then, said he, "I was born in Scotland and brought up there, and I must know the fact, and I assure you that the climate of Scotland is a great deal warmer than this." To which I answered, "and I assure you that I never will have any argument with you as long as I live."

However, Sir, in the third, fourth, and fifth paragraphs of your letter, you produce that *reasoning* of your friend, which, it seems, has, with the aid of his statement of facts, *staggered* you considerably. You say that your friend says, that merchants who get *discounts* at the Bank, purchase goods with them, send these goods abroad, get gold back for the goods, and *take up their bills at the Bank with the gold*. Now, Sir, suppose me fool enough to believe this; or, rather, suppose the merchants such extraordinary fools as to do this; how is my doctrine herein

contradicted by experience?

Has not the Bank increased the quantity of its paper by this operation? Has it not given out the paper in discounting the bill which is taken up with the gold?

And does not that paper *remain out* as long as the gold *remains in* the Bank? And is not this one of the very silly operations which I hypothetically put in my Letter to Mr. Tierney? If, in-

deed, the merchant who had got the bill discounted at the Bank were to carry in the gold that he got for the goods and also the notes that he took out for his bill; then there would be gold got in without an increase of the paper; but, until men shall be foolish enough to do this, the Bank never can get gold in without first giving out paper for it.

In your 6th paragraph your *friend* is not very happy in what you call his illustration. He appears to have perceived that there was some little jumble or



hitch in his foregoing statement; and therefore in this sixth paragraph, you say he told you that, even though the owners of the gold owed nothing to the Bank; and of course did not pay the gold into the Bank in liquidation of debt, they would do *something* with it; would get it coined, probably, and employ it in their trade; that it would thus get into general circulation as coin, and that the Bank would be able to withdraw some of their notes from circulation in a quantity equal to the amount of this coin, without diminishing the amount of the sum wanted for general use by the community.

Well! what now? Whoever said the contrary? Surely this did not *stagger* you! What should this stagger you for? Your friend never could think of staggering you by this! You must have a devil of a vertigo if

this makes you reel! What I said was (if you will please to steady yourself and get over your staggers), that the Bank could not *get gold* in without first encreasing the quantity of its notes. I never said that the Bank could not draw in its paper; but, on the contrary, I said it could, and said at the same time that it had done it in the year 1816.

I will just observe, however, that this bringing over gold for goods, and putting it into general circulation is, at present, perfect nonsense. And, I will observe further, that I think it very likely that quantities of bullion may have been brought from abroad and even lodged in the Bank. And this I take it has been done by the assistance of those drafts on the English Treasury of which Mr. Baring

spoke in the House of Commons the other day, and which he said *were circulating all over the continent*. Now, this is no other than a loan made in bullion; and if this loan be finally paid in Bank-notes not issued from the Bank for the purpose, but *raised in taxes* and given to the persons who have lent the gold, and who will be fools enough to take the paper and carry it away out of the country or destroy it, then the government will have a parcel of gold of its own in the Bank; but even then the gold will not belong to the Bank, and not one single step will have been taken towards a general payment in specie. And thus the whole of your friend's

comforting conundrum is blown into the air.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient

Humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

P. S. If you do me the favour to write to me again, pray let me have your real name at full length.

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#### TO THE READERS.

The first Number of the present Volume being out of print, and much applied for, is now reprinted. If Mr. Home Sumner will read it, it will do him a great deal more good than all his petitions.

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Errata, in this number:—P. 834, l. 32, for *single* read *singe*.—P. 836, l. 22, for *made* read *mad*.—P. 840, l. 24, for *believe* read *believed*.



TO THE  
INDUSTRIOUS CLASSES,  
ON THE CAUSES OF THE PRE-  
SENT POVERTY AND MISERY.

London, 9th Feb. 1820.

*Beloved Countrymen and  
Countrywomen,*

The picture, which our country exhibits at this moment, while it sinks our own hearts within us, fills the whole civilized world with wonder and amazement. This country has been famed, in all ages, not only for its freedom and for the security its laws gave to person and property; but for the happiness of its people; for the comfort they enjoyed; for the neatness and goodness of their dress; the good quality and the abundance of their household furniture, bedding and utensils; and for the excellence and plenty of their food. So that a LORD CHANCELLOR, who, four hundred years ago, wrote a book on our laws, observes in that book, that, owing to these good laws and the security and freedom they gave, the English people possessed, in abundance, "*all things that conduce to make life easy and happy.*"

This was the state of our great grandfathers and great grandmothers, who little thought of what was to befall their descendants! The very name of England was pronounced throughout the world with respect. That very name was thought to mean high-spirit, impartial justice, freedom and happiness. What does it mean now? It means

that which I have not the power to describe, nor the heart to describe, if I had the power. England now contains the most miserable people, that ever trod the earth. It is the seat of greater human suffering; of more pain of body and of mind, than was ever before heard of in the world. In countries, which have been deemed the most wretched, there never has existed wretchedness equal to that, which is now exhibited in this once flourishing, free and happy country.

In this country the law provides, that no human being shall suffer from want of food, lodging, or raiment. Our forefathers, when they gave security to property; when they made laws to give to the *rich* the safe enjoyment of their wealth, did not forget, that there must always be some *poor*, and that God wished, that the poor should not perish for want, they being entitled to an existence as well as the rich. Therefore the law said, and it still says, that to make a *sure and certain provision for the poor*, is required by the first principles of civil society. He who is rich to-day may be poor to-morrow; and he is not to starve because he is become unfortunate.

Upon this principle of common humanity and of natural justice the *Poor Laws* were founded; and those laws give to every one a *right*, a *legal* as well as an equitable right, to be maintained out of the real property of the country, if, from whatever cause, *unable* to obtain a maintenance through his or her

own exertions. To receive parish-relief is no *favour*! it is no gift that the relieved person receives! it is what the *law* insures him; and what he cannot be refused without a breach of the law, and without an outrageous act of injustice and oppression.

Such being the law; that is, the law having taken care, that relief should always be at hand for the destitute, the law has forbidden *begging*. It has pointed out to every destitute person the place where he can obtain legal and effectual relief, and, therefore, it has said: "you shall not *beg*. If you *beg* you shall be punished." And, as we well know, punishment is frequently inflicted for begging.

But, what do we see before our eyes at this moment? We see, all over the kingdom, misery existing to such an extent, that the poor-laws are found insufficient, and that a system of *general beggary* is introduced, under the name of subscriptions, voluntary contributions, soup shops, and the like, and, in the Metropolis, where our eyes are dazzled with the splendour of those who live on the taxes, we see that a society has been formed for raising money to provide a receptacle for the *houseless* poor during the night; that is to say, to give a few hours shelter to wretched beings, who must otherwise lie down and die in the very streets! To-day we read of a poor man expiring on his removal from one country parish to another. To-morrow we read of a poor woman, driven back from the door of one

poor-house in London, carried back to expire in another poor-house before the morning. The next day we read of a man found dead in the street, and nearly a skeleton. While we daily see men harnessed and drawing carts loaded with gravel to repair the high-ways!

Is this *England*! Can this be *England*! and can these wretched and miserable and degraded objects be *Englishmen*! Yes: this is England; with grief, shame, and indignation we must confess it; but, still we must confess that such is now once free and happy England! That same country that was, until of late years, famed throughout the world for all that was great, good, and amiable and enviable.

This change never can have taken place without a *cause*. There must have been something, and something done *by man* too, to produce this change, this disgraceful, this distressing, this horrible change. God has not afflicted the country with pestilence or with famine; nor has the land been invaded and ravaged by an enemy. Providence has of late, been more than ordinarily benevolent to us. Three successive *harvests* of uncommon abundance have blessed, or would have blessed, these Islands. *Peace* has been undisturbed. War appears not to have been even thought possible. The sounds of warlike glory have, even yet, hardly ceased to vibrate on our ears. And yet, in the midst of profound peace and abundant harvests the nation seems to be con-



vulsed with the last struggles of gnawing hunger.

It is *man*, therefore, and not a *benevolent Creator*, who has been the cause of our sufferings, present and past, and of the more horrid sufferings, which we now but reasonably anticipate. To *man*, therefore, must we look for an *account* for these evils, into the cause of which let us, without any want of charity, but, at the same time, without fear and without self-deception, freely inquire.

My good, honest, kind and industrious country-people, you have long been deceived by artful and intriguing and interested men, who have a *press* at their command, and who, out of taxes raised from your labour, have persuaded you, that your sufferings arise from nothing that *man* can cause or can *cure*. But, have only a little patience with me, and, I think, that I am able to convince you, that your sufferings and your degradation have arisen from the *weight of taxes imposed on you*, and from *no other cause whatever*.

When you consider that your salt, pepper, soap, candles, sugar, tea, beer, shoes, and all other things are taxed, you must see, that you *pay taxes* yourselves; and, when you consider, that the taxes paid by your richer neighbours disable them from paying you so much in wages as they would otherwise pay you, you must perceive, that taxes are *disadvantageous* to you. In short, it is a fact, that no man can deny, that the poverty and misery of the people have gone

on increasing precisely in the same degree that the taxes have gone on increasing.

The tax on *salt* is *fifteen shillings* a bushel. Its cost at the *sea-side*, where a kind Providence throws it abundantly on our shores, is *one shilling*. Owing to the delays and embarrassments arising from the tax, the price comes, at last, to *twenty shillings*! Thus, a bushel of salt, which is about as much as a middling family uses in a year (in all sorts of ways), costs to that family *eighteen shillings*, at least, *in tax*! Now, if an industrious man's family had the 18s. in pocket, instead of paying them in tax, would not that family be the *better* for the change? If, instead of paying 6d. for a pot of beer, (if beer a man must have) he had to pay 2d. would not he be 4d. the richer? And, if the taxes were light instead of heavy, would not your wages and profits enable you to live better and dress better than you do now?

They, who have good health, good luck and small families, make a shift to go along with this load of taxes. Others bend under it. Others come down to poverty. And a great part of these are pressed to the very earth, some ending their days in poor-houses, and others perishing from actual want. The farmers are daily falling into ruin; the little farmers fall first; the big ones become little, and the little ones become paupers, unless they escape from the country, while they have money enough to carry

them away. Thousands of men of some property are, at this moment, preparing to quit the country. The *poor* cannot go; so that things, without a great change, will be worse and worse for all that remain, except for those who live upon the taxes.

And how are these taxes *disposed of*? We are told by impudent men, who live on these taxes, that *we*, the payers of the taxes, are become *too learned*; that we have been brought *too near* to the government; that is to say, that we have got a *peep behind the curtain*. It is well known, that a great deal has been said about *educating* the poor. At one time, even the *poverty* was ascribed to a *want of education* amongst the labouring classes.—They were *so ignorant*! and that was the cause of their misery.—And poor Mr. WHITBREAD said, that the *Scotch* were better than the English, only because they were *better educated*. But *now*, behold, we are *too well educated*: we are *too knowing*; we have approached *too near* to the government; and, therefore, *new laws* have been passed to keep us at a greater distance; a *more respectful* distance.

This precaution comes, however, too late. We have had our look behind the curtain. We cannot be again deluded. We cannot be made to *unknow* that which we know. We know that the *fruit* of our labour is *mortgaged* to those, who have lent money to the government. We know, that to pay the interest of this mortgage; to pay a

standing army in time of peace; to pay the tax-gatherers; and to pay placemen and pensioners, we are so heavily taxed, that we can no longer live in comfort; and that many of us are wholly destitute of food, and are brought to our deaths by hunger.

Endeavours have been made to persuade us that we are not hurt by the taxes. It has been said, that taxes *come back* to us, and are a *great blessing* to us. And Mr. Justice Bailey has lately taken occasion to say from *the Bench*, that a *National Debt* is a good thing, and even a *necessary* thing. England did pretty well without a Debt for *seven hundred years*! How this matter came to be talked of *from the Bench* I do not pretend to know; but, for my part, I look upon a national debt as the greatest curse that ever afflicted a people. In our country it has made a happy people miserable, and a free people slaves. And, I am convinced that, unless that debt be *got rid of*, in some way or other, and that, too, in a short time, this country will fall so low, that a century will not see it revive.

Those, who wish to make us believe, that it is not the taxes that make us poor and miserable, tell us that they *come back* to us. This being a grand source of delusion, I will endeavour to explain the matter to you. I have before done it many times; but, all eyes are not *opened* at the first operation; and, besides, there are, every month, some young per-



sons who are beginning to read about such things.

BURKE, of whom many of you never heard, said that *taxes* were *dews*, drawn up by the *blessed Sun of government*, and sent down again upon the people in refreshing and fructifying *showers*. This was a very pretty description, but very false. For taxes, though they fall in *heavy showers* upon one part of the community never return to another part of it. To those who *live on taxes*, the taxes are, indeed, refreshing and fructifying showers; but, to those who *pay them*, they are a scorching sun and blighting wind. They draw away the riches of the soil, and they render it sterile and unproductive. But how came this BURKE to talk in this way? Why, he was one of those *who, lived upon the taxes!* Very fine and refreshing and fertilizing showers fell upon him. He had a pension of *three thousand pounds a-year for his life*; his wife *fifteen hundred pounds a-year for her life*; and, besides these, he obtained, in 1795, grants of money to be paid yearly to his executors *after his death!* And, not a trifle neither; for he took care to get thus settled upon his *executors two thousand five hundred pounds a-year*. The following is a copy of the grant.

"To the Executors of Edmund Burke, 2,500*l.* a-year. Granted by two patents, dated 24 October, 1795.—One for 1,160*l.* a-year, to be paid during the life of Lord Royston, and the Rev.

"and Hon. Auchild Grey.

"The other for 1,340*l.* to

"be paid during the life

"of the Princess Amelia,

"Lord Althorp, and Wil-

"liam Cavendish, Esq."

Now, as Mr. GREY is still alive, and as Lord Althorp and Mr. Cavendish are alive, the money is all of it still paid to the executors of BURKE; these executors have already received, on this account, *more than fifty thousand pounds* in principal money; and, as there is no probability of the death of the gentlemen above named, they may yet receive double the sum. BURKE's pension, while he was alive, cost the nation about *twenty thousand pounds*; and his wife's about *four thousand pounds*. So that here are about *seventy-four thousand pounds* already paid by the public on account of this one man, and that, too, in *principal money*, without reckoning *interest!*

This, you will allow, must have been to Burke, his wife and executors, an exceedingly *refreshing and fructifying shower!* But, not so to those, who have had to *pay* this money. It has not tended to *refresh* us. In the space of twenty-seven years seventy-four thousand pounds have been taken from us, who pay the taxes, on account of this *one man*. Now, suppose a different mode from the present were used in making us pay taxes. The pensions have, for the last 27 years, amounted to 2,740 pounds a year. Suppose the amount of them to have been raised upon *fifty tradesmen*, at 54*l.* a year each. Would

not each of these tradesmen be now 2,700 pounds poorer than they would have been, if they had not had these "*refreshing showers*" to send off in dews? Suppose them to be raised upon 400 labourers at about 10 pounds each. Must not these 400 labourers be made poor and miserable, must they not be prevented from *saving* a penny; and must they not, at last, be brought to the poor-house by these "*refreshing showers*?" Is not this as plain as the nose upon your face? Is it not plain that this pension to the executors of this man now takes away the means of comfortable living from nearly *four hundred labourers' families*?" Has not this been going on for twenty-seven years; and has one single man, in parliament, made even an effort to put a stop to it? Has one single man moved even for an *inquiry* into the matter? And yet, the facts are all before the parliament in their own printed reports!

And what *services* did this BURKE render the country? For, to give such a man such enormous sums, there must have been *some reason*. His services were these: He *deserted his party in the Opposition*: and he *wrote three pamphlets to urge the nation on to war, and to cause it to persevere in the war, against the republicans of France!* Which war raised the annual taxes from *sixteen millions* a year in time of peace, to *fifty three millions* a year in time of peace, and the poor rates from *two millions* a year to about *twelve millions* a year? These

were the *services*, which were so great, that it was not sufficient to give him *three thousand pounds* a year for them during his *life-time*, but we must still pay his executors *two thousand five hundred pounds* a year; and *may* have to pay them this *for fifty years yet to come!*

Need we wonder that we are poor? Need we wonder, that we are miserable? Need we wonder, that we have, at last, come to see Englishmen *harnessed* and drawing carts, loaded with gravel? And, if we complain of these things, are we to be told, that we are *seditionous*? Are we to be told, that we wish to *destroy* the constitution? Are we to be *imprisoned, fined, and banished*?

When we take a view of the effects of *taxation*, our wonder at all we see instantly ceases. We look no further for the cause of our misery. And, is there any one, who proposes to *lighten the load*? Not a man. On the contrary, every measure has a tendency to make it heavier and heavier. The act, passed last session, respecting the payment in gold bars has produced double the quantity of misery that before existed. It has diminished the quantity of paper-money, and, in the same proportion, has added to the weight of the taxes and to the want of employment for artizans, manufacturers and labourers. Let me explain to you how this effect is produced; for, it is fit that you all clearly understand what is the cause of your misery.

When money, whether it be *paper or gold*, is abundant,



every thing is *high in price*. Now suppose there to be a community of only ten men, who have a given number of dealings amongst them in a year, and who move from hand to hand a certain quantity of valuable things. Suppose one of them to be a farmer, and that he has to sell wheat to the rest, and suppose his wheat to sell for 10s. a bushel. We will suppose, next, that the quantity of money, possessed by the *whole* community to be six hundred pounds. Every one has his due proportion according to his property. Now, suppose, that, by some accident or other, every man, just at the same moment, loses one half of his money. The effect of this would be, that every one could give for the things that he would want of every other one, only just *half as much* as he gave before; and, of course, the farmer must sell his wheat for 5s. a bushel. The shoe-maker must sell his shoes at 5s. a pair instead of 10s. and so on.

This change would produce injury to no one; because a pair of shoes would still bring a bushel of wheat. There would be less money; but money is merely a thing to be used as a measure of the value of useful things. This little community would still have a just measure of value; and, though prices would fall one half, no soul would suffer from the change. But, suppose the shoe-maker to have *owed* the farmer *fifty shillings* before the change took place. The shoe-maker would lose greatly by the change; but,

the farmer would (if he were a yeomanry-man, at least) call upon poor Crispin to pay him; and Crispin must give him *ten* pair of shoes (or the price of ten pair) instead of *five*. So that, in fact, Crispin's debt, though still only *fifty shillings* in name, would, by the diminution in the whole quantity of money, be *doubled*.

This is *our* case precisely! The fund-holders, the army, the navy, the placemen, the pensioners, lent their money to the government, took places and pensions under the government, and, in fact, made the nation their *debtor* for *so much a year*. But, now that the quantity of the money is reduced in such a way as to bring down prices nearly one half, the nation has to pay them all to the full nominal amount; which, though it be still called by the same name, is, in fact, nearly *double* what it was before the quantity of money was reduced. Each of you has *fifteen shillings* tax to pay on a bushel of salt; and, so you had before; but, as fifteen shillings will now purchase *twice* as much of your labour as they would purchase before, your salt tax is in fact *doubled*.

Thus it is as to the whole nation. It has about *thirty millions a-year* to pay to the fund-holders, but *now*, the thirty are equal to what *sixty* would have been when the money was borrowed. Suppose a fund-holder to have lent the government a *hundred pounds* twelve years ago; and suppose, that he was to receive five per cent. for it.

Suppose a farmer had been to pay the interest in wheat. *Six bushels and two thirds* would have paid the five pounds. But, *now*, it would require *thirteen bushels and a third* to pay the five pounds. Thus it is that the fund-holders, and all who are paid out of the taxes *gain*, and those who pay the taxes *lose*, by a diminution in the quantity of money. And this adds greatly to the evils, which naturally arise out of the heavy taxes. And thus it is, that a nation is *scourged*, not by God, but by those works of man, a national debt and a paper-money.

But, you will say, *how* can the Bank lessen the quantity of money, and ruin the people thus by doubling the real amount of debts and salaries and pensions and other incomes of those who live on taxes? I will tell you how. The Bank can make as much paper-money as it pleases. The cost of it is merely the paper and the print. They are always *borrowers* enough. Now, I want to borrow. I go to the Bank and give them a note for a hundred pounds, which I promise to pay them again in two months. They take my note, and give me the hundred pounds in their *paper-money*, taking the two months' interest out. This interest is called *discount*; and this is called *discounting* a note. The Bank can discount as much or as little as it pleases. When I bring my hundred pounds, and take the note out of pawn, I may get another note discounted if the Bank

choose; and, in this way, the paper-money gets about. But, if the Bank have a mind to cause the quantity of money in the country to grow *less*, it *refuses to discount*, or, it discounts *less* than it did. Suppose the Bank have ten hundred notes and have lent out paper-money upon them; and, suppose, when the paper-money is brought in to pay off the notes with, the Bank will lend out paper again for only five hundred of the notes. In this case the paper-money in circulation is diminished *one half*; and, of course, *prices fall*; and, as we have seen, *taxes rise* in real amount.

This is what has been now done; and, what is more, it has been done with a professed desire to *remove the evils* that afflict the country! The pay of the placemen, pensioners, fund-holders, soldiers, and of all those who live on the taxes, has thus been augmented; and by the same means, those who pay the taxes have been ruined. The labouring classes, in all such cases, suffer most severely; but, when they are quite down, they can fall no lower. They fall into the ranks of the paupers, and there they remain. There is another class, however, who will endeavour to save themselves: I mean those who have, as yet, *some property left*. They will flee from the dismal and desolating plague. They will carry their creative industry and their capital with them. And will thus leave the burden greater for those whose timidity



makes them remain behind.—Thousands are preparing to go to America. And, unless something be *speedily* done to relieve us, they act wisely. It is, on an average, only *a month at sea*. The danger is nothing. And, when a man reflects, that he has left the tax-gatherer behind him, and can now set him at defiance, what are dangers of the sea, or any other dangers? One would escape out of England, and even out of the world, to avoid the sight of men *harnessed and drawing carts*, loaded with gravel for the repair of the highways.

No man, you will observe, proposes to do any thing that has a tendency to relieve our distress. The very measure for diminishing the quantity of paper-money is only *beginning* to operate. It has not yet produced a tenth part of the evils that it is calculated to produce, and that it will produce, if persevered in. The labouring classes, I mean, those who have no property in any thing but their labour, cannot fall much lower. Hundreds die for want of a sufficiency of food; but *hundreds of thousands will not*. And, as they have not the means of going to America, they will remain, and will *live* somehow or other; for, as to being transported to Canada or the Cape of Good Hope, they neither will nor can.

The means of restoration are, however, *easy*. The affairs of the nation *might* be retrieved,

and that, too, in a short space of time; and, if I am asked, *why I do not suggest those easy means*, my answer is, that I have done all that a private individual could do to *prevent the evils*; for all my efforts, I have, except by the people, been repaid in abuse and persecution; and that, therefore, in the capacity of a *writer*, I will suggest nothing in the way of remedy. My former efforts have been treated with scorn, and now let the scorners extricate themselves. If I were in *parliament*, I would point out the means. Not being there I will point out none. Those who have property at stake, have, *even now*, the means of putting me there. If they do, my opinion is, that measures of salvation will be adopted; if they do not, I am of opinion that no such measures will even be *proposed*. In either case I shall have the satisfaction to reflect, that I have done my duty; and whether the country be doomed to anarchy or despotism I am as able to bear the scourge as another.

Amongst our duties are the duties which we owe ourselves: and, amongst those duties is that of not suffering ourselves to be degraded. And, for my part, I should deem it degradation to the last degree to be an *under-worker* of such men as those, who have brought this once free and happy nation into its present state. An endeavour to serve the country in this way would, too, be wholly unavailing. It would only tend to

amuse and deceive. And, therefore, I will never attempt it. I will hear the schemes of others. If they adopt any thing that I have already laid down, I will claim it as my own. If they broach any thing new, I will offer my opinions on it; but, *unless in parliament*, the thing, for me, shall take its course. I, at present, owe nothing to the country, except to the labouring classes. If I am placed in parliament, it will be my duty to do much, and much I shall do: if I am not placed there, the country will have no demand upon me. Even in the utter ruin and abasement of the country I shall be neither ruined nor abased. Not to possess wealth is nothing to him who does not desire it; and, as to reputation, the world would have the justice to say, that I have lost none by events which I had foreseen and foretold, and which I had endeavoured to prevent, and for which endeavours I had been most furiously persecuted.

My beloved countrymen and countrywomen, think of these things; and, be assured that, under all circumstances, I shall bear about me and carry with me to the grave the kindest feelings towards you, and the most anxious wishes for your happiness.

I am,

Your friend,

And obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

#### TO THE REFORMERS.

*On the subject of raising a sum of money for the purpose of defraying the expenses attending the securing of a seat in Parliament at the next Election.*

London, Feb. 5, 1820.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,  
AND COUNTRYWOMEN.

The sum of money which I wished you to put me in possession of, under the name of a FUND FOR REFORM, will, I can clearly see, be raised by the time that I should think it necessary to employ it. But the death of the King has made me anxious to appeal to you for a purpose, which I think proper openly to avow; and that is, the obtaining of the means of securing a seat in the House of Commons; which seat great numbers of you are certainly very anxious that I should obtain. Before I proceed further, in speaking of the utility of my being in Parliament, suffer me to say some little matter with regard to the calumnies which have been heaped upon me by the atrocious Daily Press of the metropolis; by the still more atrocious Quarterly Review, and by almost the whole of the country newspapers. I shall go back further than may be thought necessary, in order that you may see me from the beginning. For, upon this particular occasion, I am desirous that you should have all the means of judging fairly, between me and those by whom I have so long been assailed.

At eleven years of age my employment was clipping of box-edgings and weeding beds of flowers in the garden of the Bishop of Winchester, at the Castle of Farnham, my native town.



I had always been fond of beautiful gardens ; and, a gardener, who had just come from the King's gardens at Kew, gave me such a description of them as made me instantly resolve to work in these gardens. The next morning, without saying a word to any one, off I set, with no clothes, except those upon my back, and with thirteen halfpence in my pocket. I found that I must go to Richmond, and I, accordingly, went on, from place to place, inquiring my way thither. A long day (it was in June) brought me to Richmond in the afternoon. Two penny-worth of bread and cheese and a penny-worth of small beer, which I had on the road, and one half-penny that I had lost somehow or other, left three pence in my pocket. With this for my whole fortune, I was trudging through Richmond, in my blue smock-frock and my red garters tied under my knees, when, staring about me, my eye fell upon a little book, in a bookseller's window, on the outside of which was written : "TALE OF A TUB ; PRICE 3d." The title was so odd, that my curiosity was excited. I had the 3d. but, then, I could have no supper. In I went, and got the little book, which I was so impatient to read, that I got over into a field, at the upper corner of Kew gardens, where there stood a *hay-stack*. On the shady side of this, I sat down to read. The book was so different from any thing that I had ever read before : it was something so new to my mind, that, though I could not at all understand some of it, it delighted me beyond description ; and it produced what I have always considered a sort of birth of intellect. I read on till

it was dark, without any thought about supper or bed. When I could see no longer, I put my little book in my pocket, and tumbled down by the side of the stack, where I slept till the birds in Kew gardens awaked me in the morning ; when off I started to Kew, reading my little book. The singularity of my dress, the simplicity of my manner, my confident and lively air, and, doubtless, his own compassion besides, induced the gardener, who was a Scotsman, I remember, to give me victuals, find me lodging, and set me to work. And, it was during the period that I was at Kew, that the present king and two of his brothers laughed at the oddness of my dress, while I was sweeping the grass plat round the foot of the *Pagoda*. The gardener, seeing me fond of books, lent me some gardening books to read ; but, these I could not relish after my *Tale of a Tub*, which I carried about with me wherever I went, and when I, at about twenty years old, lost it in a box that fell overboard in the Bay of Funday in North America, the loss gave me greater pain than I have ever felt at losing thousands of pounds.

This circumstance, trifling as it was, and childish as it may seem to relate it, has always endeared the recollection of *Kew* to me. About five weeks ago, I had occasion to go from Chelsea to Twickenham with my two eldest sons. I brought them back through Kew, in order to show them the place where the *hay stack* stood ; having frequently related to them what I have now related to you.

Far be it from me to suppose, that you want any thing to convince you, that the numerous foul accusations,

made against me by the public press, are *wholly false*. But, upon this occasion, permit me to say, that it is not unnecessary, and that it is but bare justice to *you*, justice to your discernment and your virtue, for me to show, that you have not conferred such marks of respect on one who is unworthy of them.

You have how, and at what an age, I started in the world. Those of you, who are *mothers* will want nothing but the involuntary impulse of your own hearts to carry your minds back to the alarm, the fears and anxieties of my most tender mother. But, if I am "*an extraordinary man*," as I have been called by some persons, who ought to have found out a different epithet, I was a still more extraordinary *boy*. For, though I never returned home for any length of time, and never put my parents to a farthing in expence, after the time above mentioned, I was always a most dutiful son, never having, in my whole life, wilfully and deliberately disobeyed either my father or my mother. I carried in my mind their precepts against *drinking* and *gaming*; and I have never been drunk and have never played at any game in my life. When in the army I was often tempted to take up the cards. But, the words of my father came into my mind, and rescued me from the peril. Exposed, as you must well know, to all sorts of temptations; young, strong, adventurous, uncommonly gay and greatly given to talk; still, I never in my whole life, was brought before a magistrate, either as defendant or complainant. And, even up to *this hour*, about *five oaths* are all that I have ever taken, notwithstanding the multitude and endless variety of affairs, in which I have been engaged. I entered the army at *sixteen*, and quitted it at *twenty-five*. I never was once even *accused* of a fault of any sort. At *nineteen* I was promoted to *Serjeant-Major* from a Corporal, over the heads of nearly fifty serjeants. While my regiment was abroad, I received the public and official thanks of the Governor of the Province for my zeal in the King's service; while no officer of the regiment received any thanks at all. Many years after this, this same Governor (General Carleton) came to see me and to claim the pleasure of

my acquaintance. When I had quitted the army at Portsmouth, I had a discharge, bearing on it, that I had been discharged at my own request, and in consequence of the great services I had rendered the king's service in that regiment. During this part of my life I lived amongst, and was compelled to associate with, the most beastly of drunkards, where liquor was so cheap, that even a soldier might be drunk every day; yet I never, during the whole time, even *tasted* of any of that liquor. My father's, and more especially my mother's precepts were always at hand to protect me.

In 1792, I went to the United States of America. There I became a *writer*. I understood little at that time; but the utmost of my ability was exerted on the side of *my country*, though I had been greatly disgusted at the trick that had been played me in England, with regard to a court-martial, which I had demanded upon some officers. I forgot every thing when the honour of England was concerned. The king's minister in America made me offers of *reward*. I refused to accept of any, in any shape whatever. Reward was offered me, when I came home. I always refused to take one single penny from the government. If I had been to be *bought*, judge you, my countrywomen, how *rich*, and even how *high*, I might have been at this day! But, I value the present received from the females of Lancashire a million times higher than all the money and all the titles which ministers and kings have to bestow.

Driven again across the Atlantic to avoid a *dungeon*, deprived of *pen, ink, or paper*, I still adhered faithfully to my beloved, though oppressed and miserable, country. I overcame every difficulty; and, to the surprise of friends and the confusion of enemies, caused a Register to be published once a week in London, though I was on the other side of the sea. And, while there, though I did much to benefit that country in the way of *agriculture*, I never did any act or uttered any word, that should seem to say, that I had abandoned England. If I had preferred tranquillity and ease and comfort to duty, I should not have returned; but have called my family to me. But, I have never had an idea of happiness distinct from the happiness



and honour of my country. The greater her distress, the more necessary the presence of those of her sons, who possess abilities to assist in saving her.

The calumnies of the London daily press, and of a great part of the weekly press and the country press, together with the *Quarterly Review*, have been so numerous, that I can only notice them in the gross. These cowardly libellers have exhibited me as a *fraudulent debtor*, and yet as being *without a shilling*. These calumnies answer themselves. But, if either were true, should I *voluntarily have come home*; and that, too, at a great expense? It is very true, that the sudden breaking up of my affairs, in 1817, following a total loss of *six thousand pounds and upwards* arising from the imprisonment and fine I had to endure for expressing my horror at seeing local-militiamen flogged, in the heart of England, under a guard of German Bayonets: it is very true, that these things, together with all the expenses attending a flight to, and a return from America, leave me comparatively destitute of immediate pecuniary means. But, was it ever before heard of in the world, that, in answer to a man's political writings, his books of account are to be produced; a list of his pecuniary engagements published; and, what is more, his *private letters*, written in confidence many, many years before, obtained from a base and treacherous agent, and published to the world, and that, too, in a partial and garbled state? Was a thing like this ever heard of in this world before; and is there, on this side the grave, a punishment adequate to so foul and so detested a deed? Consider, too, that my wife and daughters were here to support, to bear up *in silence* against all the reproaches, all the scoffs, all the taunts, all the savage insults of this numerous and united band of literary ruffians!

These cowardly and brutal men have represented me as being a harsh, tyrannical, passionate, merciless, and even greedy man. I have said before that, in the whole course of my life, I never was once before a Magistrate in any criminal case, either as accuser or accused; and that is a great deal to say, at the end of fifty-three years,

and having no one to protect or advise me since I was eleven years old. Very few men can say as much. There is hardly a quaker that can say as much, though he be much younger than I am. I never, in the whole course of my life, brought an action against any man for debt, though I have lost thousands of pounds by not doing it. Where is there a man so long engaged in business of various sorts, as I have been, who can say as much? I know of no such man. I never could find in my heart to oppress any man merely because he had not the ability to pay. I lose money by acting thus; but I did not lose my good opinion of myself, and that was far more valuable than money. Nor have I ever had an action brought against me for debt, in all my life time, until since this my last return to England; when an Attorney at Bishop's Waltham in Hampshire, had a writ served upon me, *without any notice; without even writing to me for the money*; and, what is more horrible still, the Sheriff's Officer was sent to a public Meeting, at the Crown and Anchor, and *desired to arrest me there, at the very time that I should be addressing the Meeting*. The Officer had more decency and more honour than to lend himself to such a base purpose. He followed me to my lodging; called out a gentleman who was with me, requested that I would call at his house the next day, which I did. This malicious act was perpetrated by the Attorney of one Stares, a Malster at Droxford. The debt was for about thirty pounds; a thing which I had totally forgotten, the malt having been served during the year before I went to America. This is the only action that has, in the whole course of my life, ever been brought against me for debt. Can any man say as much, who has been in a great way of business, of various kinds, during more than twenty years? I have employed, for a great many years, numerous servants and labourers at Botley. I seldom had less than seventeen, altogether; and I never had to complain of any of them to a magistrate but three times in my life; and, of all my servants and labourers, no one ever went to a magistrate to complain of me. When the printers *turned out for wages*, in London, my then printer,

Hansard, in order, as he said, to break the *conspiracy*, as he called it, of the men, asked me to *suspend* the publication of the Register for a week. My answer was, "No: the men have a right to as much wages as they can get: give the men their wages; and, if you must raise your price, I must pay accordingly." At this very time, WALTER, of the TIMES, one of my principal calumniators, was cramming printers into jail by half-dozens, on a charge of conspiracy to raise their wages. These are the men that have calumniated me; and represented me as a harsh and tyrannical man.

I have seven children. The greater part of whom are fast approaching the state of young men and young women. *I never struck one of them in anger, in my life; and I recollect only one single instance in which I have ever spoke to one of them in a really angry tone and manner.* And, when I had so done, it appeared as if my heart was gone out of my body. It was but once; and I hope it will never be again. Are there many men who can say as much as this? To my servants, I have been the most kind and indulgent of masters; and I have been repaid, in general, by their fidelity and attachment. Two consummate villains I have met with. But their treachery, though of the blackest die, will by no means tend to make me distrustful or ill-tempered. The attachment and devotion, which I have experienced from others, exceeds even the perfidy of these two black-hearted men, who, besides, have yet to be rendered as notorious as they are infamous. These two diabolical fellows have been the instruments in the hands of the proprietors of what Lord CASTLEREAGH calls "the respectable part of the press." Each of them is in possession of a considerable number of private letters of mine. These the wretches pull out and exhibit to the newspaper proprietors, as occasion may serve; though to these men I have been a most generous benefactor; and my only faults, with regard to them, are, that I did not *transport* the one, and that I *employed* the other.

Such men will always be found in the world; and we must take the world as we find it. But, were there ever before found in the world, men, the proprietors of *Literary Journals*;

men having pretensions to the character of gentlemen; men pretending to moral decency; men admitted into honourable society: were there ever before found in the world men in this walk of life, and having these pretensions, willing and ready to make their pages the vehicle of slanders drawn from a source so polluted! Never! and, to all the other disgraces, which now stain our country, we have to add this: a press almost wholly divested of every one of those characteristics, which have heretofore rendered the press a thing to be held in estimation and honour.

If I were disposed to *retaliate* upon two or three of the *setters-on* of these two perfidious monsters; if I were disposed to retaliate upon *one*, who has, in some measure, given countenance to their perfidy, by following their example, *how miserable during life, could I render that man!* But, no! the example is too horrible for me to think of following it. Besides, if the public can view this breach of private confidence without feelings of detestation towards the wretches who have been guilty of it, no exposure that any man can make, will excite such feelings against them: and, therefore, for my part, I never retaliate. I keep the means of doing of it in my hands, and forbear to do it, that my children may learn sentiments of generosity, and may contract a fixed opinion that nothing is to produce a *breach of private confidence*.

As to *forgiveness* towards the literary assassins, that is never to be expected from me. For myself, I have the power of chastisement in my hands; but, for their base and barbarous conduct, during my absence, *towards my wife and daughters*, whose lives they rendered one continued series of mortification and of grief; if, for this, *I do not bring them to some signal degree of suffering, it will only be for the want of the power of doing it.* Two or three BARRISTERS, too, have joined in the scandalous cowardice and barbarity, not to mention some persons in *another place*, from whom nothing that was just or fair no man expected.

Evil seldom is wholly unattended with good of some sort. Thus has it happened here. The outrageous slanders uttered against me, the falsehood of which nobody so well knew as my



own family, have had a tendency to make me, if possible, still dearer to that family. To feelings of filial affection uncommonly strong have been added, in the breasts of my children, an ardent desire to see me triumph over my enemies, and to inflict vengeance on them. My sons, three of whom are from *sixteen to twenty-one* years, and who, of course, must detest the very idea of belonging, even in appearance, to the same profession, which contains the cowardly, savage, and perfidious men, by whom their father has been assailed, have, nevertheless, made up their mind to sacrifice the gratification of every natural desire of their own, in order to stand by him, and to obtain justice on the insulters of their mother and their sisters. My daughters equally devoted to their father and their mother, wrote to me upon my landing: "Think nothing about us and our feelings. We are now able to labour. We can earn our bread. We shall think it no disgrace to do it. Nothing that we can do will ever half repay you and dear mama for your matchless tenderness towards us; and, as to the indulgence of *pride*, we shall always have enough of that in being able to say, that we are *your children*, and that we have, we hope, always been, and always shall be, your dutiful and affectionate daughters."

Upon reading this letter, I should have wished fire and brimstone to fall upon and consume the country, which contained the savage ruffians, whose base calumnies had awakened these apprehensions. But I was, at *that moment* surrounded by a part of YOU, my beloved countrymen and countrywomen! I was in the midst of the brave, just, and enlightened Reformers of Lancashire, whose generous congratulations wiped the tears from my eyes. And, though the public effect of those congratulations, of your addresses, and of the many marks of respect and of confidence which you have been pleased to bestow on me, from all parts of the country; though the public effect of these have been great, the effect in *my own family* has been still greater. You have given a degree of pleasure to that family, which you will much more easily conceive than I can describe. My sons are ready to stand or fall with you, and my wife

and daughters would scorn the enjoyment of any happiness which was not participated in by your wives and children.

To YOU, however, I do, and I must, look for support in my public efforts. As far as the *press* can go, I want no assistance. Aided by my sons, I have already made the ferocious cowards of the London Press sneak into silence. But, there is a large range, a more advantageous ground to stand on, and that is the *House of Commons*. If I were there the ferocious cowards of the press would be *compelled*, through their *three hundred mouths*, to tell the nation all that I should say; or, if they would not, they must give place to men who *will*. And, it is easy to imagine what I should say, how much I should do. A great effect on the public mind I have already produced; but, what should I produce in only the next session, if I were in the House of Commons! Yet, there I cannot be without YOUR ASSISTANCE. Therefore, to you, the Reformers in every part of the kingdom, I appeal for that assistance.

That it is perfectly *lawful* to subscribe for such a purpose we know by the proceedings of others; and, recollect, that PERCEVAL's opinion was taken upon the subject, in the case of that creature MAINWARING, and he gave an opinion, being then Solicitor-General, that to subscribe was *lawful*, and he added, that he himself had subscribed.

The "*Fund for Reform*," I shall, for the present, divert to this more pressing object; so that that may go on, under its present name, or under this new appellation. The parliament may be dissolved in *less than a week*; so that, now there is *no time to be lost*. I would not call upon you for a farthing; but, situated as I am, I should not, if I were to go, on this account, to any expence out of my own means, act prudently with regard to myself nor justly towards others. What will be the sum required I cannot exactly say. *Two thousand pounds* perhaps; a little more or less. But, whatever there may be over a sufficiency, shall be applied to the purpose of the *Cause of Reform*. Something approaching nearly 200 pounds has been already *actually received* towards the *Fund for Reform*. This fund will

now be applied to the present avowed purpose.

As to *myself*, all the world must know, that I have no value for *money*, otherwise than as it conduces to objects like this. I am aware, that it will be said, that if I had been careful of my *own* money, this appeal to YOU would not have been necessary. Very true; but, then, I should not have been *the man I am*: observe that. To be careful of money; to sue and be sued; to squabble about shillings and pennies: these are wholly incompatible with the pursuit of great public objects. No extravagance, of any sort, have I ever indulged in. In my whole life I never spent one evening away from my own home and without some part, at least, of my family, if I was not at a distance from that home. Except at about *ten* public dinners, I have never, during the 28 years that I have been married, eat a meal or drunk a drop, in a public house of any description, except upon a journey, or at a temporary lodging. I have never indulged in extravagance of any kind; and, as to my wife, though she is, doubtless, equalled by many, in point of prudence and economy, no one ever excelled her. She has always been kind and generous to poor neighbours in distress; and has always been as sparing as possible with regard to all other expences. In her *example* she will give her daughters a far more valuable inheritance than I could have raked together by sharp-dealing and by close-fistedness. The *two atrocious wretches*, who are now showing my private letters about London, and are serving as *informers* to the ruffians of the Daily Press, my wife always disliked and suspected. The one she

called "a *simpering knave*," the other "a *down-looking rogue*." Over and over again, a thousand times, she worried me to *take care* of these men! Women are quicker-sighted than we are. They penetrate into character more quickly. And of this, her prejudices against these two accomplished monsters of ingratitude and perfidy is a striking proof.

This is "*egotism*," "*disgusting egotism*," the ruffians of the press will exclaim! They first assail me with atrocious falsehoods, and then, when I defend myself, they call it *egotism*. These brutal men have been taunting, scoffing at, galling, mortifying, and in all ways annoying my defenceless wife and family, during my absence: and is it not right that the world should know, what sort of persons those are, whom the savages have thus treated? Is there a father, is there a mother, is there a kind and dutiful child, in this country of kind-hearted people, who will not, upon this occasion, feel, as I, my wife, and our children feel?

And what have I done to merit the reproach of any man? I have done, during my whole life, every thing in my power to serve my country. I contracted, at an early age, high notions of love and duty towards my *country*. It has been my *pride* to be an Englishman. I have been blessed with a sound body and a sound mind. I possess them still, and in their vigour too: and my only desire now is, to be able to exert their powers for the salvation of my distressed and tottering country.

I am, my beloved Countrymen and Countrywomen, your faithful friend,

WM. COBBETT.